



Media Statement

8 December 2022

Electricity Code of Conduct provides new protections to customers

The Economic Regulation Authority has approved new protections for electricity customers. Its final decision on the review of the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers 2018* was published today and the new protections will apply from 20 February 2023.

The Code regulates the conduct of retailers and distributors that supply electricity to residential and small business customers. The amendments include new protections for residential customers who are vulnerable because they are experiencing family and domestic violence.

Under the new Code, electricity retailers, including Synergy and Horizon Power, must:

- publish a family violence policy and implement measures to protect the privacy of customers experiencing family and domestic violence.
- train staff on how to identify customers who may be affected by family and domestic violence and provide assistance to those customers.
- not disconnect customers who are affected by family and domestic violence for a period of nine months.
- extend assistance in managing payments to all customers who request it, including payment extensions and instalment plans.
- set a minimum bill debt of \$300 before a residential customer can be disconnected for non-payment.
- provide targeted support and additional flexibility for customers on pre-payment meters, who are usually located in remote areas.

The new Code makes it easier for retailers to offer customers more flexible and innovative electricity products such as capped-price billing plans and mobile applications to provide bills. The changes also better align the Code with the National Energy Customer Framework and should lower retailer compliance costs.

Steve Edwell, Chair of the ERA, said, “These protections will ensure that customers who experience family and domestic violence will be assisted by retailers’ specially trained staff, have their privacy protected and not be at risk of disconnection.

“This decision is timely, coinciding with the 16 days in WA – Stop Violence Against Women campaign which runs from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) through to 10 December (Human Rights Day).

“The new protections are not limited to only people experiencing family and domestic violence or hardship. All customers who request support to meet their electricity bill repayments will be eligible for assistance.

“The changes to the Code will also enable retailers to modernise their services and communication with customers.”

The ERA will monitor retailers’ and distributors’ implementation of the Code’s new protections.

About the ERA

The ERA is Western Australia’s independent economic regulator. We aim to ensure the delivery of water, electricity, gas and rail services in Western Australia is in the long-term interest of consumers.

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